(c) whether such kind of agreement has been signed with other countries - for new destination/originating points or increase in the frequency of flights?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): (a) Traffic rights for operation of air services between any two countries are decided at the Government level. During the last round of bilateral air services talk between India and Saudi Arabia held on 29-30 December, 2002 in New Delhi, the capacity entitlement for the designated airlines of both sides was increased from 24 services per week to 31 services per week, with capacity restricted to 8500 seats in each direction. Besides, Cochin was also granted as an additional point of call to the designated airlines of Saudi Arabia.

(a) Air India is already having access to three major airports in Saudi Arabia *i.e* Riyadh, Jeddah and Dammam. Moreover, cap on their operations to Riyadh has been increased from 6 services per week to 9 services per week during the last round of bilateral talks. Air India can operate from any airport in India depending upon commercial requirement.

(b) Requests of other countries for operation of their airlines to different airports are examined as part of an on going process, depending upon traffic demand etc. As part of this ongoing process, bilateral air services talks have been held with Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Turkey, Italy and Gulf Air owner States (UAE, Oman and Bahrain) since January, 2003.

Voluntary Retirement Scheme in Indian Airlines

4036. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN:

SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(c) whether the Indian Airlines have launched a Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) targeting to reduce its non-operational work force;

(a) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(d) whether this scheme would also be applicable to cabin crew, pilots, technicians and aircraft engineers;

(b) if not the reasons therefor;

(e) whether the reduced force would affect the functioning and profitability of the Airlines in the present scenario of competition; and

(f) the alternative arrangement made to meet the situation arising out of shortage of workforce?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): (a) to (f) The proposal for Voluntary Retirement Scheme submitted by Indian Airlines is under consideration of the Government.

New Cell at Airports

4037. SHRIBJ.PANDA:
MISS MABEL REBELLO:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to set up a new Cell at the airports to oversee planning, development and upgradation of the airports;

(b) if so, the details of revamping plan, with special focus on security aspects; and

(c) whether this will cover some selected airports, if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): (a) to (c) Airports Authority of India has set up an Airport Development cell in December 2002 for development of non metro airports with the basic objective to upgrade the airports with latest technology by private sector involvement. It envisages commercial development of city side facilities at airports. Development of air side areas and activities will continue to be with Airports Authority of India. Security and safety will be as per the instructions issued by the Government from time to time. Airports Authority of India proposes to participate in joint ventures with private investors for development of passenger terminals and other city side facilities at these airports. The development of the targeted airports will be on the basis of world class global design and Expression of Interests have been invited in this regard.

Open Sky Policy

4038. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY : Will the Minister ofCIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the State Government of Andhra Pradesh has urged upon Government to go in for open sky policy to boost tourism and generate investment and employment; and

(b) if, so, the details thereof and Government's response thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): (a) and (b) Andhra Pradesh Government has approached Government of India regarding adoption of an open sky policy. The